

REMARKS

Applicants would like to extend their sincere thanks to the Examiner for conducting the telephonic interview on December 22, 2003.

Pursuant to the interview, applicants have amended independent claims 22, 41, 47, and 66 to more clarify the existence of an "intermediary" acting between the initiator of a directory assistance call and a directory assistance provider as suggested by the Examiner. *See* Interview Summary. For example, amended claim 22 now recites that the initiator's request "for taking an action ... on behalf of the initiator" is communicated to "an agent for taking the action on behalf of the initiator," and "the agent is allowed to take the action on behalf of the initiator when the action is within the set of actions associated with the level of access accorded to the agent," which is "a function of the level of access allocated to the initiator." The Examiner agreed that claim 22, as amended, and other similarly amended claims would be patentable over the prior art of record including Cox, Darden, and Ambrosini.

However, Ambrosini is not prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102. The filing date of the Ambrosini application is December 18, 2000. The applicants' filing date (November 12, 1999) pre-dates the Ambrosini reference. As such, it is respectfully requested that Ambrosini be removed from the record as a prior art reference.

The Examiner rejected the claimed invention, asserting that Ambrosini discloses allocating levels of access as in the claimed invention, which assertion is incorrect in the

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first place. Specifically, the Examiner's rejection is premised on the Bellcore F20 Specification (the "Bellcore Specification") discussed in paragraph 39 of Ambrosini. Applicants strongly disagree with this basis for rejection on several grounds. First, the rejection appears to be based on material found in the Bellcore Specification; however, applicants were not provided a copy of the Bellcore Specification, which may not be a "printed publication" under 35 U.S.C. 102. Second, the Examiner's rejection is premised upon Ambrosini's interpretation of selected content of the Bellcore Specification, which may have been taken out of context, let alone whether Ambrosini's interpretation of the selected content is accurate. If the Examiner believes that the Bellcore document is valid prior art, it is respectfully requested that a copy of the document be provided, without depriving applicants of the opportunity to fully address the rejection on the merits.

Claims 29 and 54 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox in view of Darden and further in view of Marwell. Applicants do not admit that Marwell is prior art. In any event, the claimed invention represented by claims 29 and 54 is patentable over the cited references by virtue of their dependency from amended claims 22 and 47, respectively, which are patentable for the reasons set forth above.


Dependent claims 94-97 have been added, which are drawn to various aspects of the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, each of claims 22-25, 28-29, 41-44, 46-50, 53-54, 66-69

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and 71-93, as amended, and claims 94-97, as added, is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of these claims is requested and allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully,

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